

Plant Fact Sheet

PURPLE LOVEGRASS

Eragrostis spectabilis (Pursh)
Steud.

Plant Symbol = ERSP

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center



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Alternate Names

petticoat-climber, tumble grass

Uses

Livestock readily graze purple lovegrass in the spring and early summer. On heavily grazed areas, deer dig up and eat the basal part of the stem during the winter.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's

current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values.

Description

Grass Family (Poaceae). Purple lovegrass is a native, warm-season, perennial bunch grass. The height is between 1 and 3 feet. The leaf blade is 8 to 18 inches long; densely hairy; stiffly ascending when young; tapers to fine point. The leaf sheath is longer than internodes; covered with long, gray hair. The ligule is hairy. The seedhead is open panicle 1 to 2 feet long and about as wide, bright purple until maturity; tuft of hair in axial of seed stalks, spikelets 6- to 12-flowered.

Distribution: For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Management

This grass adds variety to livestock diet but is seldom abundant enough to be a key management species. It makes maximum production when no more than 50 percent of current year's growth by weight is grazed off. A summer grazing deferment of at least 90 days improves plant vigor. This grass increases under controlled annual burning.

Establishment

Growth starts in the early spring and continues into the fall. Purple lovegrass grows in colonies. It never makes up a large percentage of plant composition. The seedheads are weak, break off easily, and tumble in the wind. Some plants produce short, slender rhizomes. It is primarily adapted to medium- and coarse-textured soils.

Cultivars, Improved and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

Please contact your local NRCS Field Office.

Reference

Leithead, H.L., L.L. Yarlett, & T.N. Shiflett. 1976. 100 native forage grasses in 11 southern states. USDA SCS Agriculture Handbook No. 389, Washington, DC.

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

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